

REMARKS

Applicants will address each of the Examiner's rejections in the order in which they appear in the Office Action.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC §103

Rejection Over Sakama and Suzawa

In the Office Action, the Examiner rejects Claims 1-9, 11-19, 21, 24-26, 28-36, 38, 40-48 and 50 under 35 USC §103 as being unpatentable over Sakama et al. in view of Suzawa et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

In particular, Suzawa issued on May 13, 2003 based on an application filed in the U.S. on November 5, 2001. As the present application was filed in the U.S. on October 24, 2001 based on applications filed in Japan on October 26, 2000 and September 25, 2001 (for which priority is claimed under 35 USC §119) and which is prior to the filing date of Suzawa, Suzawa is not prior art to the present application. Accordingly, the rejection based thereon is improper and should be withdrawn.

Rejection Over Sakama In View of Suzawa and Hashimoto

The Examiner also rejects Claims 10, 27 and 39 under 35 USC §103 as being unpatentable over Sakama et al. in view of Suzawa et al. and further in view of Hashimoto et al. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

For the reasons explained above, Suzawa is not prior art to the present application. Accordingly, this rejection based thereon is improper and should be withdrawn.

Information Disclosure Statement

Applicant is preparing an Information Disclosure Statement and will submit it shortly. It is respectfully requested that this IDS be entered and considered before any further action is entered in this application.

Please charge our deposit account 50/1039 for any fee due for this IDS.

Conclusion

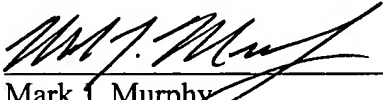
It is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and should be allowed.

If any fee is due for this amendment, please charge our deposit account 50/1039.

Favorable reconsideration is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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